



## Information Management Division (IMD)

### Pre-Publication Review – Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some of the most common questions asked about the ODNI Pre-Publication review process and instruction.

#### **Q: What is Pre-Pub Review?**

A: ODNI Instruction 80.04 requires Pre-Pub review of all information intended for public release if it relates to the ODNI, the IC, or National Security. The method in which the information is being released (speech, written, electronic, visual, etc.) does not affect the review requirement.

#### **Q: Who is covered by the Pre-Pub Instruction?**

A: All current or former ODNI employees, such as staff, contractors, detailees, or assignees must abide by Instruction 80.04. ODNI employees are required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), which is binding even after the individual leaves the IC. Instruction 80.04 implements the requirements for protecting classified material as found in the NDA.

#### **Q: What must be reviewed?**

A: Any information being released to the public that involves the ODNI, IC, or National Security must be reviewed to ensure there is no classified or otherwise sensitive information. In addition, anything prepared for official release, as part of your official duties at ODNI, must also be reviewed to ensure consistency with the ODNI branding and message, and to ensure the ODNI is properly represented. IMD partners with the ODNI Public Affairs Office (PAO) to execute this part of the review.

#### **Q: How does the process work?**

A: ODNI employees submit their material electronically to the Pre-Pub team (Unclass: [DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov](mailto:DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov)). Former employees may submit material for review through the unclassified email address. The Pre-Pub team reviews the content using current ODNI classification guidance and subject matter expert (SME) input as appropriate. If the content includes equities from other IC Agencies or Departments, the team will refer materials to those agencies for review. Once all responses are collected, the team provides a single, consolidated response to the requestor, including any required deletions, edits, or guidance before the information can be released.



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## **Q: Does UNCLASSIFIED automatically mean publicly releasable?**

A: No. All information must be reviewed by Pre-Pub before it can be released. Certain UNCLASSIFIED information may require continued protection. For example, privacy information, contractual information, or even unclassified sources and methods would likely be sensitive and therefore not publicly releasable.

## **Q: If ‘leaked’ information is in the press, is it permissible to use as a source?**

A: ODNI employees, current and former, may not rely upon unauthorized disclosed documents or statements as a source for factual statements or as proof that the information is no longer classified. Nor may they cite “anonymous sources” from media reporting if the citation, combined with their perceived inside knowledge, would tend to confirm classified information. They may cite more generally to media reports as long as by doing so they do not confirm classified information.

## **Q: What is the difference between Official and Non-Official publications?**

A: Official publication is anything intended for public dissemination as part of an employee’s official duties. Official publications are reviewed for potentially classified or otherwise sensitive information as well as consistency with the ODNI branding and message. Non-Official publication is anything prepared in an employee’s personal capacity, or anything prepared by a former employee. Non-official publications are reviewed for potentially classified or otherwise sensitive information only, and may require a disclaimer that the material does not reflect the views of the ODNI, IC, or USG per Instruction 80.04.

## **Q: I’ve been asked to sit on a panel for a discussion question and answer session. Do I need to submit anything in writing?**

A: Yes. To the greatest extent possible, employees must provide talking points or high level outlines of topics for review. DNI Pre-Pub will only look for classified or otherwise sensitive, non-public information.

## **Q: I’ve been asked to do a media interview. Do I need to submit anything?**

A: Current employees are bound by ICD 119 regarding media contact, and must work through their Public Affairs Offices regarding any media engagement. Former employees may engage with the media, but must provide talking points or high level outlines for review. It is understood that there are times that former employees may receive calls for comment from the media, and there simply is no time to follow the pre-publication review process. However, they must abide by any NDA or other agreements they have signed.

## **Q: What if my request is denied or edits are required?**



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A: If edits are required, the Pre-Pub team will work with you to find an acceptable revision. In most cases, once any revisions are made, the information is cleared for release. If additional sourcing or clarification is required, you may be asked provide the revised version of any publication for further review.

## Q: Is there an appeals process?

A: There is a formal appeals process. The Chief Management Officer (CMO) is the final authority for Pre-Pub appeals. The requestor must ask for a formal appeal if they are unsatisfied with the review response from the Pre-Pub team. However, this process is rarely used. DNI-Pre-Pub tries to work with requesters to develop an acceptable product before reaching the appellate stage.

## Q: I'm confused about how the PAO factors into the reviews.

A: PAO is the only ODNI component that can provide approval for an ODNI employee to engage with the public in an official capacity. Because this means that individuals would be representing the ODNI, PAO reviews for ODNI branding and message. PAO is part of the broader ODNI Pre-Pub team.

## Q: What materials do I need to submit for pre-publication review?

A: Examples of materials that require pre-publication review:

- Presentations to classes or groups about your job
- Course descriptions prepared for courses on intelligence or National Security
- Novels that pertain to intelligence or National Security
- Pamphlets for distribution outside of ODNI
- Opinion editorials submitted to news media (see also the [ODNI media policy](#))

Examples of materials that do not require pre-publication review, as long as those pieces of work do not include intelligence sources and method or mention the ODNI, IC or National Security: Cookbooks, articles on gardening, presentations to Cub Scouts on knot-tying, and wedding programs.

## Q: Do I still submit publications for review after I separate from ODNI?

A: Yes. You are still required to submit to DNI Pre-Pub for review of all materials intended for unofficial publication as defined in Instruction 80.04. Material must be reviewed and approved prior to being circulated to uncleared individuals, such as editors or professors.

## Q: How long will it take to review my material?

A: For planning purposes, Instruction 80.04 suggests:

15 working days for official publications

30 calendar days for non-official publications

These timelines are guidelines. Depending on the complexity of the issue and the equities involved, some reviews may take longer. In addition, DNI Pre-Pub will make every attempt to help meet your deadlines on publications such as Op-Eds. It is the



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responsibility of the requestor to protect the information until a formal approval is provided.

**Q: Can I use the ODNI seal on my presentation?**

A: The ODNI seal may only be used on official presentations and publications and must be approved by the **ODNI PAO**. The ODNI seal may **not** be combined with corporate logos and can never be used on materials prepared for unofficial use.

**Q: How do I submit material for review?**

A: Submit your material to [DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov](mailto:DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov) (Unclassified).

\*\*\*\* DNI Pre-Pub makes every attempt to ease the process by working with requesters. In most cases, information that may be of concern can either be rewritten or cited to other acceptable UNCLASSIFIED sources. \*\*\*\*

**Pre-Pub Contact Information**

UNCLASS: [DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov](mailto:DNI-Pre-Pub@dni.gov)

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